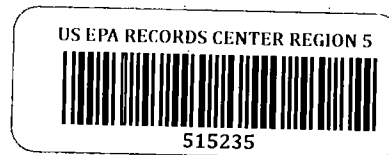
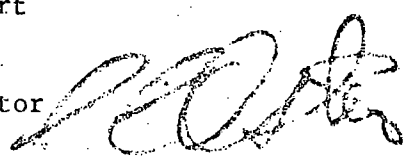


Summary

DATE: August 24, 1979

SUBJECT: Field Investigation Report

FROM: Clarence C. Oster, Director
Western District Office



TO: William H. Sanders III, Director
Surveillance and Analysis Division

Attached are three copies of the Field Investigation Report on Simplot Soil Builders, East Grand Forks, Minnesota, resulting from an investigation conducted on June 20, 1979.

A copy of this report has also been sent to the MPCA for their information and use (see attached transmittal letter).

If there are any questions regarding this report, please contact Dale Bates of this office.

Attachments

DIB/sw

FIELD INVESTIGATION REPORT
ON
SIMPLOT SOIL BUILDERS
EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA

August 20, 1979

Performed By
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Western District Office
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Facility: Simplot Soil Builders
P.O. Box 590
U.S. Highway 2
East Grand Forks, MN 56721

Responsible Official: J.J. (Jack) Rasmussen, District Manager
(218) 773-2421

Date of Inspection: June 20, 1979

Participants: John J. (Jack) Rasmussen, District Manager, Simplot Soil Builders
Gordy Hoeger, Plant Superintendent, Simplot Soil Builders
Dennis Askim, Farm Manager, Potato Research Center, Red River
Valley Potato Growers Ass., P.O. Box 301, East Grand Forks,
MN 56721 (tel: 218/773-3633)
Robert Haynes, President, Haynes Chemical Co. Inc., 421 Dimers
Ave., East Grand Forks, MN 56721 (tel: 218/772-5177)
Jim Durkin, Staff Writer, Grand Forks Herald, Grand Forks, ND
Ed Plissey, Maine Potato Commission, P.O. Box 71, Presque Isle,
Maine 04769 (tel: 207/769-5061)
Robert Leis, Consumer Safety Officer, USEPA-WDO (Co-Author)
Dale I. Bates, Wastewater Programs Coordinator, USEPA-WDO (Author)

Purpose:

This investigation was performed as a result of a newspaper article that appeared in the Grand Forks Herald on March 11, 1979 (see Attachment A) to determine if any potentially hazardous pesticides were buried at the Simplot Soil Builder's site.

Findings and Conclusions:

1. A disposal site at the Simplot Soil Builder's location was previously utilized for the disposal of material from their operations, but has been filled in.

- a. Based on the best information available, a one-time dump of material from the Potato Research Farm took place in the spring of 1975. The material consisted of empty pesticides containers and small quantities of fungicides and insecticides; none of which are considered to be potentially hazardous.
 - b. An unknown quantity of material from Simplot, previously Northland Chemicals Inc., has been buried at the disposal site. It is believed that possible hazardous materials, namely Aldrin and Dieldrin, are buried at the site based on information provided by an individual who wished to remain anonymous.
 - c. The disposal site is located in clay soil. There appears to be minimal danger to ground water; however, potential contamination of the Red Lake River is possible via lateral transport of leachate.
 - d. The analytical results (see Attachment B) of the samples collected during the inspection revealed detectable quantities of arsenic, Aldrin, Dieldrin and DDT present in the soil sample. Further investigation as to the actual contents of the disposal site appear to be warranted.
2. A second disposal site was discovered on Simplot Soil Builders property adjacent to the Red Lake River. The site was supposedly utilized to bury parts of some old buildings which were torn down. This building belonged to Driscoll Brothers, a neighbor to Simplot.

Description of Facility

Simplot Soil Builders is located on U.S. Highway 3 southeast of East Grand Forks just east of Polk County Road 58. The plant is a distributor of prepacked commercial pesticides and a blending facility for a line of solid pesticides. The facility was owned by Northland Chemicals Inc. prior to it being bought by Simplot.

Conduct of Investigation

The investigation consisted primarily of interviewing individuals who had knowledge of the incident or were directly involved in the incident. A summation of the interviews with each individual is provided below:

1. Jim Durkin, Staff Writer, Grand Forks Herald

He essentially had no further information than what appeared in the newspaper article. However, based on telephone conversations with an individual who does not wish to be identified, there is reason to believe that some toxic pesticides possibly containing arsenic are buried at the Simplot site.

2. Robert Haynes, President, Haynes Chemical Co., Inc.

Mr. Haynes was contacted because he had previously had some sodium or calcium arsenate stored at his blending plant. It was substantiated that the product in question had been disposed of at the Grand Forks Sanitary Landfill sometime in 1975.

3. Dennis Askim, Farm Manager, Potato Research Center, Red River Valley
Potato Growers Assn.

Based on his recollection of the dumping incident at Simplot, the arrangements for the disposal of the material from the Research Farm were made with Simplot by Ed Plissey who has since moved to Maine.

According to Mr. Askim, the material dumped at Simplot consisted mostly of empty pesticide containers and packing material. In addition, about 200 pounds of solidified Manzate 400, a fungicide, and 5 or 6 empty 55 gallon drums that had contained a Dow herbicide, were among the contents. Empty containers for Dithane M-45 and FMC Polymer, both fungicides, were believed to be among the material. Although he was not involved in the actual dumping of the material at the Simplot site, he recalled that their truck (a GMC with a 12 foot box) was from 1/2 to 2/3 full and that the disposal of the material took place in the spring or summer of 1975 or 1976. He also indicated that all empty pesticide containers now go to the Grand Forks Sanitary Landfill.

4. John J. (Jack) Rasmussen, District Manager, Simplot Soil Builders

Mr. Rasmussen indicated that the disposal site in question on their property was utilized for disposal of trash and empty pesticide cans and containers from their own operations. Ed Plissey had asked for permission to dump a truckload of empty containers, etc. that had accumulated at the Research Farm and Mr. Rasmussen had given his permission to make the one-time dump at the Simplot disposal site. According to him, the waste material from their operations as well as from the Research Farm were dumped into a pit that had been dug on site, were burned and then covered with dirt. He

indicated that to his knowledge nothing toxic was dumped into the disposal pit. The disposal site is no longer utilized as all of their waste material now goes to the Grand Forks Sanitary Landfill.

Mr. Rasmussen indicated that he would cooperate fully with the investigation, but felt that there were no potential hazards regarding the disposal site and allowed soil and water samples to be collected. During the tour, it was noted that an area adjacent to the Red Lake River (designated dump site No. 2 on Attachment C) had a depression filled with water and had a variety of debris scattered around it, including some empty pesticide containers. Mr. Rasmussen stated that he had no knowledge that this particular site existed, but would check into it. On June 22, 1979 Mr. Rasmussen contacted Mr. Leis to relate that he had talked to the individual (Driscoll) who had utilized the site for dumping. According to Mr. Rasmussen, Driscoll stated that the ground sank following this year's spring flood, forming the water-filled depression and that he doesn't know how the pesticide cans got there. Driscoll is going to disc around the dump to keep the weeds down for now.

5. Ed Plissey, Marine Potato Commission

Based on a telephone conversation between Mr. Plissey and Mr. Bates on June 26, 1979, it was determined that the material from the Potato Research Farm was dumped at the Simplot site on a one time basis in the spring of 1974 or 1975. The material dumped at the site consisted mostly of empty containers, some possibly containing some residue of their original contents. Drawing from his memory of the incident, Mr. Plissey related that about 50 pounds of solidified Manzate 400 fungicide, a

partially full 5 gallon can of a liquid copper fungicide, a 55 gallon drum half-full of a soil fungicide and about 15 pounds of solidified systemic insecticide Dacamex 10-G were part of the contents dumped at Simplot. He indicated that none of the material dumped from the Research Farm contained any toxic or hazardous materials such as arsenic to the best of his knowledge. The material was dumped in a hole estimated to be 10 to 20 feet deep, 40 feet wide, and 80 feet long which had been dug just south of some concrete slabs on Simplot's property. Mr. Plissey was not aware of what additional items were dumped into this hole from other sources. He stated that he would cooperate with the agency in any manner even to the point of flying out to point out the exact location of the dump site.

6. Informant (who would like to remain anonymous)

This person, who would like to remain, if possible, anonymous, visited Bob Leis at his motel room on June 20, 1979. This informant stated that he was not the person who had first tipped off the Grand Forks Herald nor does he know who that person is. This informant stated that he had worked for Simplot at the time the big pit was dug and it was around June either in 1974 or 1975. Simplot cleaned out his warehouses at this time and dumped into the pit, which was about 12 feet deep and 20 feet long, all the material they couldn't sell any longer. The only things buried that this informant can remember for sure was approximately 50 gallons of Aldrin and Dieldrin and he was quite certain some old DDT also went into the pit. In addition, approximately 6 barrels that were 30 or 50 gallon capacity, contents unknown, were placed in the pit. The informant gave Bob Leis a

map of the pit site. The pit had been dug by Delzer Construction, the material placed in the pit and immediately covered with dirt by Delzer. The operation was supervised by Gordy Hoegar and the informant is quite certain Jack Rasmussen, present manager, Simplot, knew about the pit.

What was put into this pit has bothered this informant ever since he helped put the material into it. The informant is concerned due to the fact that he and his family obtain their drinking water from the Red Lake River which runs by Simplot. The informant did state if no other way could be found to remove the potential hazard that he would give Bob Leis a signed statement as to what he knew about the material he helped bury on Simplot's property.

It should be noted that at the time of the alleged burial, the property may not have yet belonged to Simplot but could have been owned by Northland Chemical with Jack Rasmussen as the president.

Water and soil samples were collected for analysis of pesticides to determine if there were any hazardous concentrations present. Upstream and downstream samples were collected from the Red Lake River next to the shoreline. Water samples were collected from the drainage ditch and pond at the second dump site. A soil sample to a depth of 6 inches was collected downhill from the dump site. Each of the sampling points is marked on Attachment C.

Agency to probe chemical cemetery

MAR 11 1979

By Jim Durkin
Herald Staff Writer

Just outside the city limits of East Grand Forks, with a few blocks of the Red Lake River, unknown amounts of unknown chemicals were buried.

The chemicals reportedly are buried on property owned by Simplot Soilbuilders on Highway 2 East.

Simplot officials aren't worried about what may be buried there, but the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is.

Simplot officials initially denied knowledge of any buried chemicals on their property. However, on Friday Jack Rasmussen, Red River Valley district manager for Simplot, said it had just been brought to his attention that some chemicals had been buried on Simplot property.

Rasmussen said Simplot formerly had a dumping ground which was used as a trash disposal point by the company. He said the dump wasn't generally used by the public.

About three or four years ago, Rasmussen said, a truck loaded with trash from the Potato Research Farm nearby used the dump. A current Simplot employee recalls that the research farm truck contained some chemicals, Rasmussen said. The man, whom Rasmussen would not identify, does not remember what kinds or amounts of chemicals were dumped.

Rasmussen said he isn't certain who, if anyone, authorized the truck to dump there. "They may have gotten the impression they could come and dump things into it," he said.

The manager of the Potato Research Farm at that time is no longer with the operation and couldn't be reached for comment. None of the other officials at the farm could recall the incident.

After the truck had been dumped, the employees buried the trash and chemicals, Rasmussen said. The clay hole was later covered with dirt.

Rasmussen said the chemicals are in a seven- to eight-foot-deep hole in a bed of clay about 2½ blocks from the Red Lake River.

Although the Red Lake feeds into Red River, and both rivers are sources of the water supplies of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, Rasmussen said, "at the present time, we don't feel there is any problem. We feel whatever chemicals are in that hole have been destroyed."

Clarence Oster, the director of the Western District office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), doesn't agree. "We'll do some further investigating, that's for sure. I would personally be very, very interested in whatever we could come up with. Perhaps we might even do some excavating. It won't be forgotten until we know for sure what's there and how much there is."

Oster said the EPA investigation would not be done until the ground thaws.

"If there is something there, it would be best if the company removed it," Oster said. "Maybe someone just used some bad judgment when they buried it and, so far, they haven't done too much wrong. But if it's not corrected, the barrels may corrode and the chemicals could start to seep into the ground water and then there would be a big problem."

"I'd like to feel that they (Simplot officials), as good neighbors, would be curious and go back to see what they have buried and remove it. We're not out to nail anybody, but the problem should be rectified."

Rasmussen said the company quit dumping trash on Simplot property about 18 months ago. "We have quit that now, realizing that with the con-

Attachment B

Analytical Results
 Simplot Soil Builders
 East Grand Forks, MN
 June 20, 1979

<u>Parameters</u>		<u>Drainage Ditch WD08S01</u>	<u>Red Lake River Downstream WD08S02</u>	<u>Red Lake River Upstream WD08S03</u>	<u>Dump Site #2 Pond WD08S04</u>	<u>Dump Site #1 Soil WD08S05*</u>
l Arsenic	µg/l	28.6	--	--	0	8.58
in.	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0.05
C	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0
lordane	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0.56
drin	µg/l	0.05	0	0	0	0.09
- DDD	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0
- DDD	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0
- DDE	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0
- DDE	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0.15
- DDT	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0.93
- DDT	µg/l	0	0	0	0	4.21
cin	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0
achlorepoide	µg/l	0	0	0	0	0.02
achlorobenzene	µg/l	0	0	0	0	<0.01

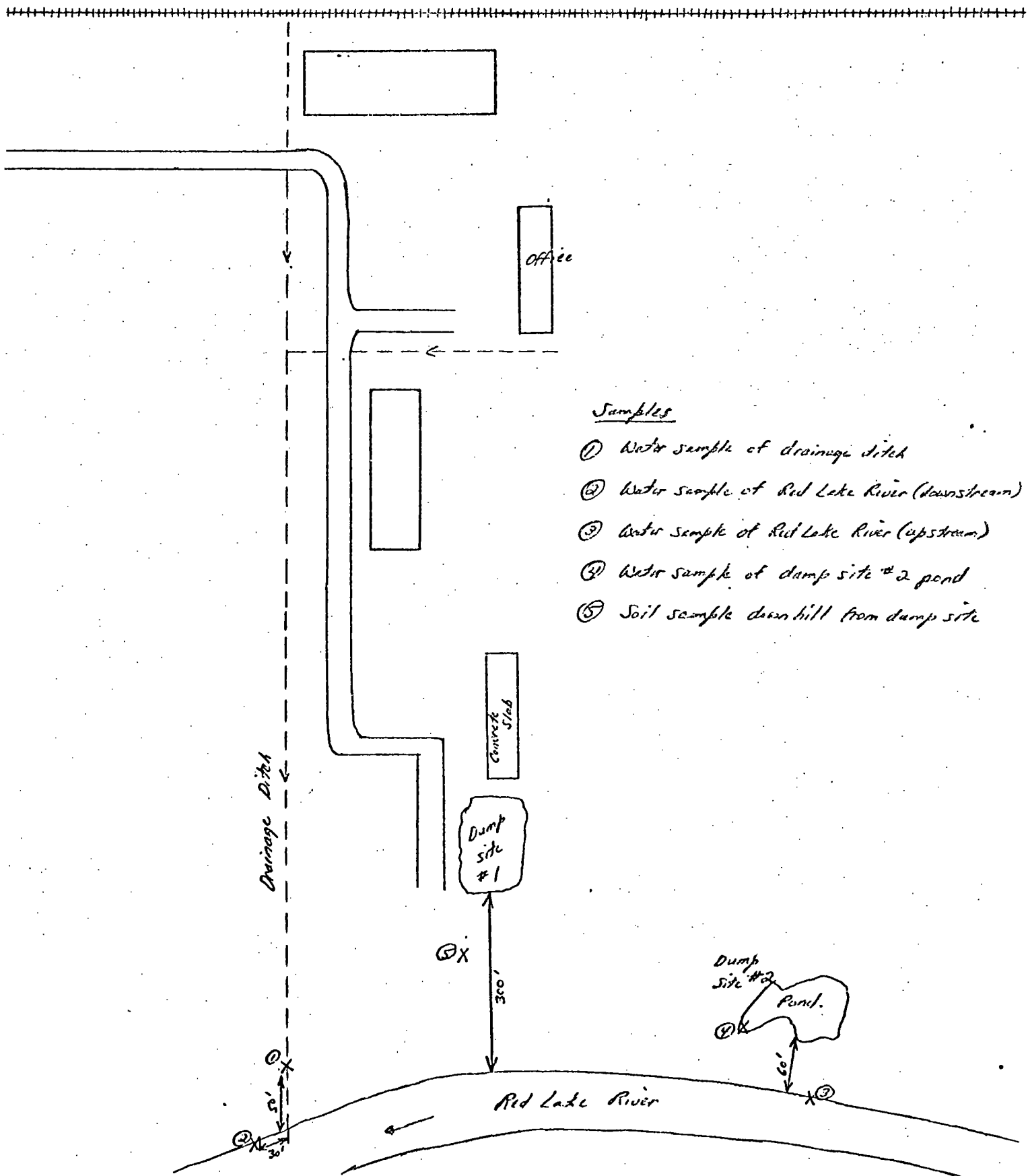
* All analytical results in mg/kg units.

e: Zero values indicate that none was detected during analysis. Dash indicates analysis was not performed on sample.

ATTACHMENT C

Site Diagram
Simplot Soil Builders
East Grand Forks, MN

U.S. Highway 2





UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V

WESTERN DISTRICT OFFICE
7401 LYNDALE AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55423

August 24, 1979

Ms. Terry Hoffman, Executive Director
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
1935 West County Road B2
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

ATTN: Mr. Dale Wikre, Acting Director
Solid Waste Division

Dear Ms. Hoffman:

Attached is a copy of the Field Investigation Report on Simplot Soil Builders, East Grand Forks, Minnesota. This report is the result of an investigation conducted on June 20, 1979 by this office in follow up to a newspaper article that appeared in the Grand Forks Herald. Hazardous pesticides were suspected of being buried at this site.

As you will note in the report, further investigation appears to be warranted since detectable amounts of toxic pesticides were present in the samples collected at the site. Since this office is scheduled to close on September 30, 1979 and the field support for Minnesota is not known at this time, it is uncertain what support, if any, our agency would commit to further investigation of this problem. In any event, you are urged to investigate further to seek a resolution of this potentially dangerous situation.

If you have any questions regarding this, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Clarence C. Oster, P.E.
Director

Attachment

DIB/sw